

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Status of the Claims:

Claims 1-29 have been canceled. Claims 30-44 are currently pending, of which claims 33 and 39 are currently amended, and claims 43 and 44 are withdrawn from consideration due to the Restriction Requirement dated April 15, 2003. Claims 30-42 accordingly are presented for further review.

Rejections:

Claims 22-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for obviousness over FCI's Jumbo PV Receptacle in view of Miwa (U.S. Pat. No. 5,788,542). Applicant respectfully traverses.

The examiner states that "FCI's Jumbo PV Receptacle shows substantially the invention as claimed...[and] Miwa shows a protecting wall portion 51." The examiner further states that "[I]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to protect the bent portion of FCI's Jumbo PV Receptacle with the protecting wall portion of Miwa...".

Applicant respectfully submits that a proper §103 analysis requires that obviousness or nonobviousness be determined for the claimed subject matter **as a whole**, which involves taking into account **all** of the limitations of a claim. It is incorrect to focus the §103 analysis on the gist of the invention (protecting a resilient contact member from damage) relative to the prior art. Claims 30-42 recite limitations that are not disclosed by either FCI's Jumbo PV Receptacle or Miwa, and these limitations have been ignored by the examiner. Thus, the claimed subject matter as a whole has not been considered.

For example, independent claim 30 recites, inter alia, an external opening formed at the interface between a front end of a contact section and an entry portion that is adjacent the front end, with the leading edge of a flexible contact element extending into the external opening. Neither FCI's Jumbo PV Receptacle, nor Miwa disclose or suggest a receptacle terminal including these recited features and configuration.

Independent claim 33 recites, inter alia, a first tubular portion forming an insertion pathway, and an adjacent second tubular portion, wherein central axes of the first and second tubular portions are misaligned such that a space is formed in which a flexible contact element leading edge is positioned. Neither FCI's Jumbo PV Receptacle, nor Miwa disclose or suggest a receptacle terminal including these recited features. Since each of the references relied upon by the examiner disclose only a single contact tubular portion or body, it is impossible for either reference to teach or suggest the configuration of a first tubular portion and a second tubular portion as recited in claim 33.

Independent claim 39 recites, inter alia, a contact section comprising a first tubular portion having an entrance, an external opening formed in the contact section and spaced apart from the entrance, and a flexible contact element including a leading edge that extends through the external opening. Both of the references disclose a contact section entrance, but fail to disclose or suggest an external opening spaced apart from such entrance through which a flexible contact element leading edge extends.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant submits that independent claims 30, 33 and 39 are patentable over the combination of FCI's Jumbo PV Receptacle and Miwa. The remaining pending claims 31-32, 34-38, and 40-42 depend from one of these independent claims, and

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are therefore, by definition, also patentably distinct from the references of record.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the section 103 rejection is respectfully requested.

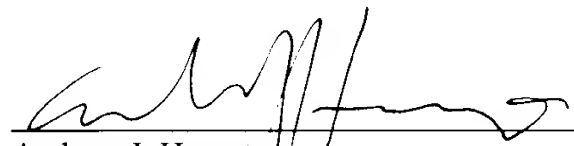
Information Disclosure Statements:

The Office Action indicates that Information Disclosure Statements filed on January 25, 2002; February 25, 2002; and September 30, 2002 have been considered. However, signed examiner copies of the respective PTO-1449's have not accompanied Patent Office correspondence to date. Applicant requests the documents be provided.

Conclusion:

The foregoing represents a complete response to the Office Action, and Applicant submits that claims 30-42 in their present form are in condition for allowance. Early and favorable consideration is earnestly solicited.

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